

Dead Thinking

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Man needs to give himself a perspective on nonknowledge in the form of death. Bataille

To 'realize' the concept of nothingness is not to see nothingness but to die. Levinas

Alive Thinking

There is an absolutely obvious, normal step, almost a command, a silent requirement to do what we should do in order to secure and improve our life. We want to succeed, to achieve something in this world. Our thinking, perceiving, behaving are shaped by a belief in (the improvement of our) life which guides us in our daily activities, in our moral and political attitudes. An alive thinking is consolidated on and on and this alive, healthy thinking constantly forms us as healthy, functional humans. And as humans we want that a healthy, alive world takes shape around our healthy habits.

William James witnessed how healthy thinking became a new religion or at least a new background for old religions in the middle of the 19th century when the advance of liberalism brought about "a victory of healthy-mindedness" over the morbidity of the old 'hell-fire theology'. Healthy-mindedness believes in universal evolution, 'general meliorism', progress, and appreciates "the conquering efficacy of courage, hope, trust". Healthy-mindedness fosters an optimistic "muscular attitude", similar to the one implicit in 'Don't Worry Movement' which has a motto that one is encouraged to repeat to oneself often: 'youth, health, vigor!'. But healthy-mindedness brings also contempt: for doubt, fear, worry, and "all nervously precautionary states of mind". For a healthy mind "the attitude of unhappiness is not only painful, it is mean and ugly". It is impossible to maintain this healthy-mindedness without "zealously emphasizing the brighter and minimizing the darker aspects of the objective sphere of things at the same time . . . we divert our attention from disease and death as much as we can; and the slaughter-houses and indecencies without end on which our life is founded are huddled out of sight and never mentioned."¹

Healthy thinking avoids morbidity and tries to be optimistic but this doesn't matter too much, the morbidity is in the world itself – we may abandon morbidity but morbidity is not abandoning us. We believe in life and we are attached to the features of this world but this world is doomed, we are doomed. As we all know, death is much more powerful than life, at least we feel it if we don't think it. But death is not just a personal problem anymore, we are in an era of death, in a dying world. Now we know that we are in the middle of the extinction – we are in the quickest species extinction period, faster than when dinosaurs were extinct, facing climate change, imminent resource depletion, catastrophic economic disorder, etc. This planetary decline affects our modes of perceiving, thinking and feeling, we somehow register these changes and we are affected even (or especially) if we are not aware. But if we are not aware maybe there is a reason for that, apart from the tendency of healthy thinking to protect itself from disturbing thoughts.

Whitehead associates the concept of 'life' with the concept of individuality and with "a complex process of appropriating into a unity of existence the many data presented as relevant by the physical processes of nature."² This could be seen as one of the first steps towards an alive healthy thinking, together with what we can call the acquiring of a life perspective as the perspective of a proto-self that starts to narrow experience according to its interests. Or, in the words of Claire Colebrook: "the very desire for completeness that drives the organism to couple with its world will also preclude it from seeing the world in any terms other than its own."³ The premises of the current politics were born along with life and are naturally part of life. We can sense in this 'life' the seeds of a thinking which is instrumental, use-oriented, self maintaining,

managerial. A life is growing and an identity is constituted, an alive thinking is slowly installing itself exactly through this attack upon the environment. A thinking which produces and is produced by a 'malevolent life' because of which "the earth will continue to be sacrificed to the blindness of an organic thinking that can only insist upon its own self-evident value."³ Our healthy love of life equals the extinction of life.

We realize that our ways of seeing, feeling, thinking and behaving are equivalent with the extinction of life and we are scared but like in a stampede, or like in any other moment when there is too much or too little information, imitation takes over. We just reinforce and accelerate what the others are doing and what we know, our petit alive, healthy thinking. A naturalized panic maintains the parameters of thinking unchanged. A similar blockage is also the desire to imitate the past. The air is filled with nostalgia: maybe we can go back to a time before the world was disenchanted, before we lost contact with ourselves and nature, before life became violent and instrumental. Maybe we can have again the magical thinking from before the witches were burned to create space and momentum for the acceleration of our malevolent thinking. Maybe we can have again a more complete and meaningful relation with the environment. Maybe we can reduce the distance from nature and be nature again. Maybe something can be done for the human to be re-animated, sensible, empathic and to feel again – and perhaps this life enhancement will bring back the hope and the future will exist again...

If the present panicked healthy thinking is not an option and the nostalgic turning back seems impossible and uninteresting, what about accelerating towards the future? Maybe the way out of the optimistic and destructive enlightenment is to accelerate it – "the only way out is all the way through". Via Bataille, Deleuze, Nick Land, one of the moves of the recent years is to accelerate reason: epistemic accelerationism. Negarestani considers that to the 'old rationality' an attitude of avoidance and suppression of the unknown was and is specific. Classical rationalism verifies what already knows, it cannot mobilize itself to confront the obscure, the unknown. That's why it appears as rigidity, dogmatism and it has the burning of the witches as its emblem. Negarestani is arguing for a new elan of rationality – a new rationality that is no more afraid of the irrational and the unknown. The new rationality is akin to the cowboys of the wild west, it is "the frontier man of reason" – it carries the violence of reason. New rationality "deploys the whole armamentarium at the limits of the irrational". Instead of dismissing the irrational it confronts it frontally. It confronts the irrational not to verify it but to imagine new methodologies of reason.⁴

This new rationalist approach starts with a necessity to minimize the assumptions. After you have eliminated almost everything, including gods, beliefs and mysticism, reality is a minimal desert upon which we can start to construct rules and practices to manipulate ourselves and nature, to know ourselves by constructing ourselves. A world grows around the reason that amplifies itself. A world in which we begin to approach truth and goodness through 'a game of navigation'.⁵ It seems that the way to confront the unknown is to start from scratch and to build a fully bright world, a world without darkness, without unknown. But what if after we have truly minimized the assumptions we end up not with a bright fully-navigable desert but rather with something closer to nothingness, to the void, to an impenetrable darkness?

Then the new rationalist project seems to share the destiny of old rationalism. Stengers outlined this destiny by describing Descartes as a tiny figure surrounded by darkness, holding a lamp that radiates a hopeless circle of light. Descartes, she continued, turns in circles repeating: "I think therefore I am, I think therefore I am, I think therefore I am..."⁶ If we continue this analogy it seems like the circles of the new rationalists are getting bigger and the light stronger. Or if we continue the remark of Jünger about the philosophers of the unconscious who were exploring darkness with the flashlight, we can say that the new rationalists are studying darkness with the most powerful projectors ever. This image – the assault upon the unknown with huge projectors in a sea of darkness – is not only hilarious but also hopelessly heroic somehow. It is a strange

super-healthy thinking, and if we think along the “night is also a sun” of Nietzsche, maybe we can say that after a point too much light is darkness too.

Either way, darkness seems unavoidable. What can we do after we have understood that we are facing a non-navigable darkness that cannot be illuminated and approached by reason? We cannot stay where we are because the enlightened world is collapsing, neither do we possess the necessary abilities to approach darkness. This is the place where Dead Thinking could appear, in the twilight of reason, where the hopes end, and the remaining options are rather dark, negative and dead. Instead of accelerating a new rationalism maybe we should prepare a new mysticism for the non-navigable darkness that is here. Dead Thinking starts as an acceleration in the wrong direction, an approach to darkness with darkness. And as an accelerated correlationism, with a twist – everything is you but you are nowhere to be found.

Thinking with Death

Light for Levinas is the condition for meaning, for thinking but also the condition for property, which “constitutes the world”: “through the light the world is given and apprehended. . . The miracle of light is the essence of thought: due to the light an object, while coming from without, is already ours in the horizon which precedes it.”⁷ Light is about registering information, about the known and knowable, it is the foundation of healthy and alive thinking. But something unsettling is camouflaged in light itself. A strange night can sometimes be felt in the most ordinary moments of plain healthy thinking, “different forms of night” can occur right in the daytime. “Illuminated objects can appear to us as if in twilight shapes. Like the unreal, inverted city we find after an exhausting trip, things and beings strike us as though they no longer are composing a world, and were swimming in the chaos of their existence.”⁷ Not only is light always encompassed by darkness but darkness lingers there, even in the most beautiful moments, in the most delightful sunny landscapes. We all know it and maybe feel it sometimes when we are ‘weak’: “something dark, something abysmal always finds its way into the bland beauty of such pictures, something that usually holds itself in abeyance, some entwining presence that we always know is there.”⁸

If nothing else, time will dismantle our defenses and we will become weak and permeable to this darkness that is not just a rare and special ingredient of daylight but is the reality behind the superficial spectacle of light. Not only does night come again and again but it is there all the time. Or in Cioran words: “At first, we think we advance toward the light; then, wearied by an aimless march, we lose our way: the earth, less and less secure, no longer supports us; it opens under our feet. Vainly we should try to follow a path toward a sunlit goal; the shadows mount within and below us.” In this context the source of “all of life’s evils” is our “will to exist at once imperceptible and shameless” – a too optimistic conception of life which doesn’t account for the fact that “life is what decomposes at every moment; it is a monotonous loss of light, an insipid dissolution in the darkness, without scepters, without halos.”⁹ Or as Nick Land later put it: this “feverish obscenity we call ‘life’. . . appears as a pause on the energy path; as a precarious stabilization and complication of solar decay.”¹⁰

A minimum optimism can be maintained for a while, with great costs of energy, but slowly the effort needed to maintain the hope of life cannot be sustained anymore. The obsession with life is just a cramp, a short-time stiffness in front of the unknown, an insignificant small blockage on the path to annihilation. Whatever we are doing, death is inside every action, it is the reality and the final aim of everything. Everything is dead or on the path to death. From this point of view the obsession with life looks like a strange disease. We have to do amazing cognitive acrobatics to be able to maintain for a while our normal ‘irreality’, our petit healthy thinking. It is a great effort to keep holding it in this way, why not just let go? It seems that we are in a good time for a release, for a departure from the bright perspective of life. The protective skin of life is very thin

nowadays. Because of the three main aspects of contemporary thinking – materialism, scientific rationalism, and the idea of progress – “there is a sense of the meaninglessness of a purely materialistic and mechanistic world and an accompanying awareness of the nihilism that lies concealed just beneath the surface of the world.”¹¹

But the decisive factor that disturbs our healthy thinking is the event of extinction. Extinction functions as a new gravitational force which affects everything and bends thought differently. Everything that was normal and ordinary now becomes totally ridiculous. A lot of what was pathological becomes the new reasonable. In the movie Melancholia, Justine is the sister who allowed for the coming extinction to do its work on her thinking and feelings. From the perspective of healthy thinking she behaved madly, whilst she was the only one attuned to the reality of extinction. Shaviro (via Dominic Fox) calls this pathological move ‘militant dysphoria’, which is a ‘state of being that no longer sees the world as its own, or itself as part of the world. As Fox puts it, “the distinction between living and dead matter collapses. The world is dead, and life appears within it as an irrational persistence, an insupportable excrescence.”¹²

If the shadows of Melancholia grow too big, a time comes when the optimistic alive thinking cannot hide anymore the fact that existence is sorrow, that ‘life is evil’. What in the eyes of a healthy thinking seems madness and depression is in fact just a dissipation of the veil of healthy thinking. There is a sorrow which is not related to particular aspects of ‘my life’ but a sorrow of existence itself, a sorrow that is constitutive of the workings and matter of the Universe. A sorrow that is the ground of being.¹³ “Everyone has something to sorrow over, but none more than he who knows and feels that he is. All other sorrow in comparison with this is a travesty of the real thing. For he experiences true sorrow, who knows and feels not only what he is, but that he is.”¹⁴ In a paradoxical ouroboros type of move the extinction approaches and affects (eats) the ‘I’, the cause of extinction. Maybe under the shadow of Melancholia we should embrace this extinction of the ‘I’, to voluntarily take the perspective of death and admit that “from the very outset life is at one with death. This means that all living things, just as they are, can be seen under the Form of death.”¹¹ If you think from the future you cannot have other perspective than one infested with death. And this perspective comes with a new horror – the horror of living. The horror of living and the horror of death are mirroring each other like in the Etruscan torture in which a living body is coupled face to face, as close as possible, to a corpse till they rot together. According to Negarestani, the true and often neglected horror in this case is the horror of life seen through the eyes of the dead. “It is indeed ghastly for the living to see itself as dead; but it is true horror for the dead to be forced to look at the supposedly living, and to see itself as the living dead, the dead animated by the spurious living” it is a molestation “of the dead with the animism of the living.”¹⁵ The perspective of death or of the dead can be too much, and for the same reasons too little – it could be too detached from our actual behaviors and for this reason it is difficult for it to enter in relation with our life activities and really affect us. The fact that death is the ultimate unknown can be so removed and distant a truth that it becomes inoperative. Paradoxically, the perspective of death could be as stable and solidly grounded in death as the perspective of the living is grounded in life. It can easily remain just a weird form of healthy thinking, a game of morbid imagination, too spectacular and exaggerated to really menace us. But a zone between death and life, or a zone of death-life, in which a minimal perspective of the living is preserved, enough for a fear of death and a thinking with death to be effective, seems much more corrosive for a healthy thinking.

In different mystical traditions the constant presence of death in proximity of every doing gives a real perspective on things, about what really matters. Similarly, the subtle and constant presence of the fear of extinction can give a sense about what is important at a bigger scale. Thinking and acting have to take this immense force into account. There is a big problem with most political thought that still functions in a paradigm of progress and improvement, totally inadequate with

the time of accelerated contraction and descent in which we find ourselves. The world is crumbling and any politics, any thinking about the present, has to take this into consideration. Then the question is: how to insert death and fear in what we are actually doing, not just in what we imagine? What else is to be found in death and darkness other than (indeed very interesting) thinking-games, limits of thinking or aesthetic experiences of the negative sublime?

Dead Thinking

Light is a deception, what appears is always below potential, below expectations. If you enter a dark place and turn the lights on, there is a moment, usually imperceptible, of deception (and relief): everything is so much less than what it could be. The promise of darkness is always betrayed when light invades. But darkness is usually a deception as well. For Cioran darkness can be "quite as mediocre as the light". Probably because "night itself is never dark enough to keep us from being reflected in it."⁹ Usually we implicitly add imaginary light and sight to every darkness, constantly forcing a light-continuity into it, automatically filling darkness with what we know, projecting our world into it. For Bataille the world of objects persists in 'simple night' because of an attention that functions by 'way of words'. But there is a darkness that is not the absence of light but 'absorption into the outside' by way of a heart that has dilated and is no longer an organ but an 'entire sensibility'.¹⁶

This sensibility is exactly what is usually avoided in order to maintain a certain sanity. The potential, the fear, the unknown are automatically evacuated from every night. Instinctively and naturally 'pathological' sensibility is being avoided in all societies. It is preferable to not have a soul than to have one that is a source of fear because of its instability and contact with the unknown. In the Wari tribe from Amazonia, the soul gives the body not feelings, thoughts or consciousness but it gives it instability. The Wari hold that "healthy and active people do not have a soul (jam-)."¹⁷ A soul that gives instability is unhealthy and not desirable. The healthy approach is to prefer a safe and knowable territory, a space that can be constantly fortified with alive habits and healthy thinking. A space that stays forever lightened – even after you turned off all the lights.

But what if, following a pathological drive, you want to escape the lively and luminous prison, so sharply described by Clarice Lispector: "I can understand only what happens to me, but only what I understand happens?"¹⁸ A possible answer comes from John of the Cross: "to come to be what you are not you must go by a way in which you are not."¹⁹ The problem is that the only way in which you know how to go is the way in which you are. All what you are capable of comes from what you know. And the way in which you are is the result of going on known ways. Practically, this is a prison that you cannot leave and for which there is no knowledge about how to escape it because you and all the knowledge that you (can) have are the prison. You are always on known roads to known lands, there is no outside, no darkness – everywhere and everything is too much you.

It is no wonder that in the majority of mystical and shamanic approaches this is the point where a self-annihilation, crucifixion, disintegration or dismembering is advised. For our times this seems a bit exaggerated and out of place because there are no social and cultural environments, active rituals and beliefs that can facilitate such mystical operations in this world. There are no grounds and possible beliefs that could pull us in a spectacular move into the outside of the prison. If we cannot go for a big, mystical and dramatic move of self-annihilation, an option left is to start from zero, from small moves of self-alteration at the level of micro-behaviors, micro-perceptions, weak affects – to develop a sort of a low mysticism that operates at the atomic level of the everyday behaviors – darkness, outside, unknown, and maybe even death to be constructed.

The black box of the theater is a possible environment for low mysticism – it facilitates a focus on the details of life, a detachment of actions, thoughts and affects from the everyday reality,

people, objects, and even a work with abstract behaviors and states of mind. The blackness of the walls helps to concentrate the attention on any object, person, movement, thought that is introduced in the box, and the walls are also a constant subliminal reminder of the darkness of the outside. The fourth wall, where the audience (real or imaginary) is, functions as a strange impersonal eye that forces an outside perspective on the person in the box – a visual but mostly affective perspective that can be interiorized and always there, after a certain point. An apparently neutral space seems to be ready, inviting to construct, amplify and manipulate realities.

Just that this black box is not empty or neutral at all, at least as long as you or another 'I' is in it. The prison that Lispector speaks of becomes apparent, our healthy thinking shines in its plenitude in a black box. All the habits of perception, thinking, movement are amplified. We appear there as old knowledge sedimented automata programmed and animated by the past, without presence. And forced to become partially self-aware by the black box frame, the bodies usually become stressed, anxious, tense, rigid – ridiculous puppets that spoil the darkness of the box with their embodied petit healthy thinking. Humans feel exposed there – living deceptions for this outside eye of which they are part as well, the eye of the fourth wall. For amplifying and exposing all this the black box is magical indeed. And because of that, usually this magical side is quickly drowned in decors, representations, characters, stories – a whole spectacle is enforced to cover up this unpleasant capacity of the black box to reveal our petit healthy thinking. An obsessive avoidance of the magic of the black box is a sane decision for an artist if she doesn't want to end up in too a revelatory 'Teatro Grottesco' that can have only one consequence: "the end of that artist's work."²⁰

A performer who enters the black box without any constraints, free to do whatever she wants, with the intention to go beyond what she knows and find the 'new', will almost invariably fill the stage with automatisms and clichés and, as any performer already knows, everything will end up in a grotesque 'bad improvisation'. It is not enough to 'abandon' the known and expect the unknown to appear. For Bataille quite the opposite is the case, one should go till the end of the possibilities of knowing before arriving to unknowing.²¹ Rather than pretending to renounce knowledge one should, on the contrary, push it to the limits, know everything that one can about the situation in which one enters and at the same time abandon it by choosing to not act according to it but leave it in the background, where it is totally needed, in the hope of making a leap beyond. This accentuation of knowledge, along with the renunciation of it, is a paradoxical and very difficult move because, if one actualizes all the information about a certain issue, one is automatically inclined to use it.

As Nick Land via Bataille observed: "no organism is adapted to arrive at the unknown."²² The default procedure is that we function based on what we know by implicitly following the available package of knowledge and expectations that are embedded in every situation. Through a strike of the 'I', combined with a suspicion about 'I know', the impression that something comes from outside, from beyond, or despite ourselves, can be created. New habits based on this 'impression' are ready to appear and an investment in the unknown – a belief in the beyond-us is activated. We can even start to name that beyond: affect, intuition, unconscious, unknown, darkness, outside, after life, death, divinity, nature, etc. A faith in the unknown seems to be the condition for a leap beyond the known, for the unknown to exist –even if this beyond or outside doesn't exist, by starting to behave as it does, it will start to coagulate itself, to exist. For practical reasons, it doesn't really matter if we discover an outside or if we create it, if there really is something alien that comes in when we retreat, or if this exterior agency is constructed and is 'just an illusion', both situations have the same effects and further than that it doesn't really matters.

The desire for 'global nonknowledge' is for Bataille the stranger question of philosophy. And as a philosopher you are in trouble when this desire is awake because you have to function in the area

of a difficult paradox: in order to get close to this nonknowledge you have to annihilate the will to knowledge – “each time we relinquish the will to knowledge. . .possibilities are, in effect, more open” and we have “a far more intense contact with the world. . .From the death of thought, from nonknowledge a new knowledge is possible.” And if the philosopher is pushed to the extreme by her desire, the paradox gets worse: “man needs to give himself a perspective on nonknowledge in the form of death.”²¹ At a level of a low scale mysticism this desire for nonknowledge can be translated into a slow disappearance of ourselves as constituted by past actions and decisions through an insertion of ‘I don’t know’ in each atom of behavior.

A minimal death can be brought by cultivating an autophagic intelligence – an ouroboric reason that is not just an attack on the environment but an attack on itself. To assist the auto-installation of a suicidal habit of the known, a practice could be the constant application of infinite negations like in the ‘via negativa’ of the dark mysticism: this thing or behavior is not that, and is not that, neither that... For a real or imaginary spectator (an embedded spectator at work even in the person of the performer) it feels like a withdrawal of the image from action itself, the representation is not allowed to stabilize, the recognition is obstructed. This can be felt as if something is playing tricks with your mind. And often the reaction is laughter – for Bataille a standard reaction when the unknown confronts the human. In Romanian there is a saying: “you’re laughing, you’re laughing but this is not your laughter.” It is implied that something else is laughing in you. And for a performer to be able to generate this withdrawal of the image something else has to perform within her as well, she has to be herself taken by surprise. The retrieval of the image is an impossible action that cannot be done voluntarily – you cannot do it, it is done to you.

This “self-negating form of representation” pushed to the limit can induce “a retinal pessimism: there is nothing to see (and you’re seeing it)”, and points towards a “nothingness prior to all existence, an un-creation prior to all creation”, towards blackness.²⁴ Blackness is a limit of perception and thinking, and it contains in itself the potential to exit the terrain of the known, to exit the healthy visuality – the utilitarian gaze always in search of objects to exploit or to feed on. A night which we do not grasp through thought can bring a “cessation of thought” in which the ‘I’, if it is still there, is “the object rather than the subject of an anonymous thought.”⁷ This gloomier night “more terrible than any night” is issued from a “wound of thought which had ceased to think, of thought taken ironically as object by something other than thought”, by the night itself.²⁵ This dark night “which enters the soul” has a divine intelligence that should be trusted and followed, even if it is silencing human faculties, paralyzing the human part of the host: “it is God who is now working in the soul; He binds its interior faculties, and allows it not to cling to the understanding, nor to have delight in the will, nor to reason with the memory. . .in darkness the soul not only avoids going astray but advances rapidly.”¹⁹

There is a close relation between darkness, unknown and fear. Not only is darkness one of the main triggers of the unknown but, in a mysterious way, by focusing on darkness through the techniques of unknowing mentioned above, darkness can become more than a visual experience, it can be felt, especially as fear. The fear of darkness is the moment when the senses cannot extract much from the world: what is available to us, what we know, is not enough in order to be in control and maintain ourselves stable. Then a sensibility for the unknown can appear, first in a form of a cold chill of fear in the body. It is not the usual fear coming from a fantasy about the future but a dark-fear that comes from a feeling of the present. It is a fear of the potential and unknown in the darkness, a fear that directly touches and affects you physically. Fear is the substance of darkness, it is the way in which darkness communicates – darkness is fear.

In a strange YouTube tutorial a man on an empty beach teaches the viewers how to arrive to a shadow-body showing repeatedly how: “my consciousness tells my mind to tell my body to move his hand, and the hand moves the shadow”. By showing how his shadow follows the body he

demonstrates that the shadow obeys his consciousness.²⁵ Dead Thinking 'teaches' us an opposite type of approach: to start from the shadows and let them affect the body, mind, consciousness – instead of increasing control of consciousness over the shadows, allow the shadows to increase their power to affect consciousness; giving more importance to shadows rather than to the illuminated features of things; going beyond the visual – free the eyes, let them be attracted and moved by the shadows, touch and be touched by the darkness – eyes as skin specialized, oversensitive overgrown to meet-touch the light, skin-eye that sees-touches; amplifying the shivering of dark-fear until the feeling of darkness permeats the skin; perceiving shadows, darkness as feelings, as low and smooth fear – as minimal horror hidden in ordinary situations; unblocking the contact with fear – the fear of the shadows that we see when we are alone in a forest during the night and the fear of our own shadow in plain day, both feeding the unknown. Fear as bridge towards the unknown: the only thing Dead Thinking will consolidate. A healthy, organic thinking corresponds to alchemical procedures that were developed for the extraction/production of the gold out of nigredo (the maximal putrefied blackness), of the real from the unreal, of the rational from irrational. Inversely, dead thinking could be a reversed minimal alchemy, a practice animated by death's own habits – from gold to a nigredo-feeling – love of gold, light, life are replaced by a smooth fear of darkness, unknown and death. We don't know where an extended dead thinking could lead. We don't know what could be a post-political gesture in a time of extinction when politics, in the sense of organizing society and power relations between people, seems more and more a sedative for deadly thoughts. But we can say together with Masciandaro that "the only politics of black universe is black itself" and "black is the dislocation of the universe."²⁶ We don't know what a Dead Thinking can do, apart from making us available to darkness, and this is already too much, too scary.

1 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*

2 Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*

3 Claire Colebrook, *The Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction*

4 Reza Negarestani lecture at PAF, 2013

5 Reza Negarestani lecture at PAF, 2014

6 Isabelle Stengers via Andreling, *Gestes Spéculatifs* lecture

7 Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*

8 Thomas Ligotti, *The Shadow at the Bottom of the World*

9 Emil Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*

10 Nick Land, *The Thirst for Annihilation*

11 Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*

12 Steven Shaviro, *Melancholia or, The Romantic Anti-Sublime*

13 Nicola Masciandaro, *A Matter of Sorrow*

14 The Cloud of Unknowing

15 Reza Negarestani, *The Corpse Bride: Thinking with Nigredo*

16 Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*

17 Aparecida Vilaça, *Chronically Unstable Bodies: Reflections on Amazonian Corporalities*

18 Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*

19 John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*

20 Thomas Ligotti, *Teatro Grottesco*

21 Georges Bataille, *The Unfinished System of Non Knowledge*

22 Nick Land, *Fanged Noumena*

23 Eugene Thacker, *Black on Black*

24 Maurice Blanchot, *Thomas the Obscure*

25 How to activate a shadow body: <http://t.co/KfH6TiA2gi>

26 Nicola Masciandaro, *Secret: No Light Has Ever Seen the Black Univer*